

## WEB RESOURCES ON VETERANS' HEALTH INFORMATION

### GENERAL HEALTH

#### **MedlinePlus Evaluating Health Information -**

<<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/evaluatinghealthinformation.html>> and  
Guide to Healthy Web Surfing - <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/healthywebsurfing.html>>

#### **MedlinePlus.gov – Health Topics: Veterans and Military Health -**

<<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/veteransandmilitaryhealth.html>>

MedlinePlus – The site was created and is maintained by the National Library of Medicine, a part of the National Institutes of Health to assist in the location of authoritative health information.

#### **ClinicalTrials.gov –** <<http://clinicaltrials.gov>>

ClinicalTrials.gov is a registry of federally and privately supported clinical trials conducted in the United States and around the world. ClinicalTrials.gov gives you information about a trial's purpose, who may participate, locations, and phone numbers for more details.

### DISABILITY

#### **Disability Info -** <<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov>>

This site is a collaborative effort among 22 Federal agencies and is intended as the Federal government's one-stop website for people with disabilities, their families, employers, veterans and service members, workforce professionals and many others. It connects people with disabilities to the information and resources they need to actively participate in the workforce and in their communities. Information is available in 9 subject areas: employment, education, housing, transportation, health, benefits, technology, community life, and civil rights.

#### **Disability Info: Veterans and Military Section**

<<http://www.disabilityinfo.gov/digov-public/public/DisplayPage.do?parentFolderId=156>>

This section of the main disability information site provides news and information regarding new programs and resources as they become available. Users can also search for state and local resources on a wide variety of topics specific to veterans and members of the military community.

### GENERAL MILITARY HEALTH

**My HealthE Vet** – <<http://www.myhealthyvet.va.gov>> or <<http://www.myhealth.va.gov>>

As the gateway to veteran health benefits and services, this site provides access to trusted health information, links to Federal and Veterans Administration benefits and resources, a personal health journal and online VA prescription refills for qualified registrants. In the future, MyHealthE Vet (MHV) registrants will be able to view appointments, co-pay balances, and key portions of their VA medical records online. Access to online medical libraries is provided through the National Library of Medicine's MedlinePlus® and WebMD's Healthwise®.

**Deployment Health Clinical Center (DHCC)** – <<http://www.pdhealth.mil/hcc/scc.asp>>

The core mission of this U.S. Defense Department's Center is to improve deployment-related health by providing caring assistance and medical advocacy for military personnel and families with deployment-related health concerns. DHCC serves as a catalyst and resource center for the continuous improvement of deployment-related healthcare across the military healthcare system. This mission is accomplished through a three-pronged strategy of: direct health care delivery, outreach and provider education, and clinical and services research. Library links provide information on health conditions and concerns, interactive health assessment tools, and databases of interest to both clinicians and patients.

**VA Polytrauma System of Care** – <<http://www.polytrauma.va.gov/index.asp>>

Polytrauma care is for veterans and returning service members with injuries to more than one physical region or organ system, one of which may be life threatening, which results in physical, cognitive, psychological, or psychosocial impairments and functional disability. Some examples of Polytrauma include: traumatic brain injury (TBI), hearing loss, amputations, fractures, burns, and visual impairment. There are available tools to assist families and to locate facilities in the polytrauma system.

**Disabled American Veterans (DAV)** – <<http://www.dav.org>>

This organization has over 1 million members and is dedicated to providing free assistance to veterans in obtaining benefits and services earned through their military service. According to the website, DAV is the foremost representative of the interests of disabled veterans and their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before federal, state, and local governments. Their National Legislative Program ensures disabled veterans are not forgotten by lawmakers. Through a wide network of state-level Departments and local Chapters, DAV extends its mission of hope to communities where disabled veterans and their families live. Its leadership is organized to provide a structure through which these veterans can show compassion for their fellow veterans. Services provided include transition services, disability evaluation, mobile service, informational seminars, claim representation, and many others.

**Deployment Health and Family Readiness Library** –  
<<http://deploymenthealthlibrary.fhp.osd.mil/home.jsp>>

This library provides Service members, families, leaders, health care providers, and veterans an easy way to find deployment health and family readiness information. Within this library you'll find access to fact sheets, guides, and other products on a wide variety of topics published by the

services and organizations that serve veterans and their families. Additional web links to other organizations and resources devoted to the health and well-being of Service members and their families are also available. Some featured information includes: a hazardous noise and deployment fact sheet, evidence-based management of post-traumatic stress disorder, potential hazards of industrial solvents and preventive measures to protect against overexposure, and caregiver stress educational materials.

**Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)** – <<http://www.ninds.nih.gov/disorders/tbi/tbi.htm>>

TBI is the signature injury of the Iraq War. Information on how the injury occurs, treatment, prognosis, clinical trials and research is featured on this site. Organizations are also listed for further information.

**Veterans and Military Health: Websites Serving North Carolina** –

<<http://www.nchealthinfo.org/resources.cfm?info=0,164,0,0,0>>

While most of the resources on this site are specific to North Carolina, there are many useful information resources or may help the user locate a similar program in his or her state. This extensive list is produced by NC Health Info. A significant component of NC Health Info is the NC Go Local database, a collection of Web links to more than 5,000 Web sites of local health facilities in all 100 of North Carolina's counties. This database of local links was the first resource of its kind to link local health services with corresponding information from MedlinePlus, the consumer health site maintained by the National Library of Medicine and the National Institutes of Health.

## **MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

**Vet Center** – <<http://www.vetcenter.va.gov>>

The Department of Veterans Affairs Vet Center program operates a system of 207 community based counseling centers. The Vet Centers are staffed by small multi-disciplinary teams of dedicated providers, many of which are combat veterans themselves. Vet Centers provide readjustment counseling and outreach services to all veterans who served in any combat zone. Services are also available for their family members for military related issues. Veterans have earned these benefits through their service and all are provided at no cost to the veteran or family. The 207 community based Vet Centers are located in all fifty states, District of Columbia, Guam, Puerto Rico and the US Virgin Islands.

**National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder** –

<<http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/ncmain/index.jsp>>

The National Center for PTSD (NCPTSD) aims to advance the clinical care and social welfare of U.S. Veterans through research, education and training on PTSD and stress-related disorders. This site is an educational resource on PTSD and traumatic stress, for veterans and also for

mental health care providers, researchers and the general public. The Center's vision includes the facilitation and rapid translation of science into practice, assuring that the latest research findings inform clinical care; and translation of practice into science, assuring that questions raised by clinical challenges are addressed using rigorous experimental protocols. By drawing on the specific expertise vested at each separate division (e.g., behavioral, neuroscientific, etc.), the National Center provides a unique infrastructure within which to implement multidisciplinary initiatives regarding the etiology, pathophysiology, diagnosis and treatment of PTSD. The PTSD Information Center has Fact Sheets and Videos to answer questions on trauma, PTSD and related issues. A good place to start is the section entitled, "what is PTSD?" Another very helpful document is the "psychological first aid guide."

**Mental Health Self-Assessment Program** – <<http://www.MilitaryMentalHealth.org>>

Available in Spanish and English, this site offers a self-assessment questionnaire for the user to determine whether or not current symptoms are consistent with a condition or concern that would benefit from further evaluation or treatment. It is not intended to provide a diagnosis, but can offer guidance as to where the user might also seek assistance. The self-assessments are voluntary and anonymous.

**VA Mental Health** – <<http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>>

The mission of the Office of Mental Health Services is to maintain and improve the health and well-being of veterans through excellence in health care, social services, education, and research. Their site has many excellent resources including information regarding services, suicide prevention, PTSD, and counseling.

## **SUPPORT GROUPS AND ORGANIZATIONS**

**Citizen Soldier Support Program** – <<http://www.ribbonstoreality.org/>>

Spearheaded by the Odum Institute at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the Citizen-Soldier Support Program (CSSP) focuses specifically on the needs of National Guard and other reserve component members and families.

**Wounded Warrior Project** – <<http://www.woundedwarriorproject.org>>

The mission of this non-profit organization is to raise the awareness and enlist public aid for the needs of severely injured service men and women, to help severely injured service members aid and assist each other, and to provide unique, direct programs and services to meet needs.

**Military Homefront** – <<http://www.militaryhomefront.dod.mil>>

This site is the official Department of Defense web site for reliable quality of life information designed to help troops and their families, leaders and service providers. A wide variety of advocacy information is available.

**Military Onesource** – <<http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>>

This 24/7/365 service is available by phone, online and face-to-face through private counseling sessions in the local community by highly qualified, master's prepared consultants. Personalized consultations on specific issues such as education, special needs, and finances are provided. Customized research detailing community resources and appropriate military referrals are also offered. The site includes locators for education, child care, and elder care, online articles, referrals to military and community resources, financial calculators, live online workshops called Webinars, and "E-mail a consultant." Additional resources include brief videos of consultants addressing common issues such as communicating as a couple, budgeting and managing anger.

**Amputee Coalition of America** – <<http://www.amputee-coalition.org>>

The Amputee Coalition of America (ACA) is a national, non-profit amputee consumer educational organization representing people who have experienced amputation or are born with limb differences. The membership is comprised of individual amputees, amputee education and support groups for amputees, professionals, family members and friends of amputees, amputation or limb loss related agencies and organizations. The majority of the governing Board of Directors are amputees. According to the site, the organization operates on the principle that education enables individuals who have lost a limb to participate knowledgeably in decisions about their own care, services, and outcomes. To achieve their highest potential, people with limb loss must play the central role in decisions affecting their lives; only then can they fully embrace life and its limitless opportunities for self-fulfillment. The ACA exists to provide this education.

**National Amputation Foundation** – <<http://www.nationalamputation.org>>

The National Amputation Foundation (NAF) has for over 50 years been offering valuable assistance to veterans of World War I, II, Korea, the Vietnam Conflict, Desert Storm and Iraqi Freedom. The organization was founded in 1919 by a group of amputee veterans who suffered the loss of limb or limbs in the service during World War I. From its inception, the foundation was aware of the needs unique to amputees, and therefore dedicated its efforts to helping all veteran amputees. The foundation has since expanded its facilities to include civilian amputees. The foundation sponsors an Amp-to Amp program, which provides visits whenever feasible, by an amputee member of their organization, who has returned to a normal life. The organization believes this has proven to be a real morale builder. They have a list of support groups for every state and offer booklets and pamphlets of special interest to the amputee. Donations of medical equipment are also accepted and distributed to those in need.

## **DEMOGRAPHIC GROUP RESOURCES**

**Women Veterans Health Strategic Healthcare Group – <<http://www1.va.gov/wvhp>>**

While supporting the overall mission of Department of Veterans Affairs and in collaboration with VA's Center for Women Veterans established in 1994, the Women Veterans Health Strategic Healthcare Group specifically addresses the health care needs of eligible women veterans, providing appropriate, timely, and compassionate health care. A full continuum of comprehensive medical services is provided, including health promotion and disease prevention, primary care, women's gender-specific health care (e.g., hormone replacement therapy, breast and gynecological care, maternity and limited infertility), acute medical/surgical treatment, telephone, emergency and substance abuse treatment, mental health, domiciliary, rehabilitation and long term care. VA researchers at many VA facilities also conduct medical research on women's health.

**Center for Minority Veterans – <<http://www1.va.gov/centerforminorityveterans/>>**

The Center for Minority Veterans is part of the Office of the Secretary. The Center assists eligible veterans in their efforts to receive benefits and services from the Veterans Administration. The Center acts only as a mediator and facilitator; it does not process claims, handle equal employment complaints, or deal with employee relation problems. The Center is dedicated to ensuring that all veterans are aware of benefits, services, and programs offered by VA. The Center's main goal is to provide and promote the use of VA programs, benefits, and services use by minority veterans, to make benefits and services more accessible to minority veterans, and to evaluate current programs and make recommendations on how the VA can better serve minority veterans.

**National Native American Veterans Association – <<http://www.nnava.org>>**

The mission of the National Native American Veterans Association is to educate and assist Native American Veterans without regard to Tribal Affiliation, degree of Indian Blood, branch of the Armed Forces, or Combat Status with regard to Veteran Rights, Entitlements, and Benefits. The National Native American Veterans Association will also assist Tribal Entities in the development of Veteran Groups within each Tribe if desired, and provide a resource center for the Tribal Entities for information on Veteran Rights, Entitlements, and Benefits which can be used to augment current Tribal Programs.

**BlackMilitaryWorld – <<http://www.blackmilitaryworld.com>>**

Blackmilitaryworld.com provides a daily source of news, information, history, and a variety of other information to interested viewers, both employed by the Department of Defense and non-military. The organization's mission is to celebrate and recognize the contribution and struggles of Black Americans in military service. This website does not necessarily serve the interest or the goals of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government, but still shows its appreciation for the valuable role that Black Americans have played throughout American military history.

## **SPINAL CORD INJURIES AND DISEASE**

**National Spinal Cord Injury Association** – <<http://www.spinalcord.org>>

The NSCIA is the oldest and largest civilian organization dedicated to improving quality of life for hundreds of thousands of Americans and their families living with the results of spinal cord injury and disease (SCI/D) and their families. The organization's mission is to educate and empower survivors of spinal cord injury and disease to achieve and maintain the highest levels of independence, health and personal fulfillment. They provide an innovative Peer Support Network and raise awareness through education. Educational programs are developed to address issues important to their constituency, policy makers, the general public and the media, and include injury prevention, improvements in medical, rehabilitative and supportive services, research and public policy formulation. They provide information and referral to individuals with new and existing SCI/D, their families and their service providers. Their National Peer Support Network provides peer support referrals to programs across the country, linking people with SCI/D to each other.

**SPINALCORD: Spinal Cord Injury Information Network** – <<http://www.spinalcord.uab.edu>>

This is a Federally-funded website devoted to providing the most complete resource for SCI and disability-related information, the Spinal Cord Injury Information Network site, produced by the University of Alabama at Birmingham, offers educational and research information relevant to persons with SCI, their families, and others of interest. There is original information managed by the UAB Model SCI System along with links to web sites around the world that contain SCI educational and research information.

**MedlinePlus: Interactive Tutorial – Spinal Cord Injuries** – <<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/spinalcordinjuries.html>>

This interactive tutorial explains the anatomy involved in spinal cord injuries, causes, symptoms, treatment and prevention. The tutorial uses animated graphics and explains the condition in easy-to-read language so that the user can read or listen to the tutorial.

## **REFERRAL**

**VALNET: VA Library Network** – <<http://www1.va.gov/VALNET>>

A Health Sciences Library Network, under the OneVA concept, VALNET member libraries support the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Health Care System, the Veterans Benefits Administration, and the National Cemetery Administration. VALNET libraries and librarians provide knowledge-based information for clinical and management decision-making, research, and education to enhance the quality of care for more than 5 million veterans enrolled in the VA Health Care System. VALNET serves a diverse group of users, including VA staff and

employees, students and trainees in affiliated teaching programs, and veteran inpatients and outpatients, their families, and caregivers.

## **BENEFITS**

### **IRIS – Inquiry Routing and Information System – <<http://iris.va.gov>>**

IRIS is the Veterans Affairs system to obtain information about military benefits. There are 321 FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions) and an Ask a Question option. Answers can be found here for such things as education benefits, how to file a Board of Veterans Appeal, toll-free numbers for contacting the VA about benefits and a listing to help locate VA facilities.

### **GovBenefits.gov – <<http://www.govbenefits.gov>>**

The site provides online guidance to a variety of federal government benefit programs. Benefits information may be located by state, federal agency, and category. Users answering a lengthy questionnaire on the site can retrieve a list of links to benefits programs for which they may be eligible. One of the goals in their mission statement is to continue to add programs and become the single source for Federal, state and local government benefit programs. A search for “veterans” produces a list of 49 potential programs.

## **INSURANCE AND GENERAL CONSUMER HEALTH INFORMATION**

### **Navigating the Health Care System: A Resource Guide for Consumers – <<http://library.uchc.edu/departm/hnet/hcbib.html>>**

This guide was put together by Healthnet: Connecticut Consumer Health Information Network, Lyman Maynard Stowe Library, University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington, CT. It includes information on evaluating physicians and hospitals, communicating with doctors, managed care plans, Medicare, obtaining health insurance, organizations that can provide assistance, long-term care, end of life decisions, and privacy rights.

### **Questions and Answers about Health Insurance Guide – <<http://www.ahrq.gov/consumer/insuranceqa/>>**

From the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), this guide is designed to help consumers make important health insurance decisions. The guide explains different types of health insurance, including network-based plans, non-network based coverage, and consumer-directed health plans. It also provides a glossary of health insurance terms as well as additional resources to obtain more information. Print copies are available by sending an email to [ahrqpubs@ahrq.hhs.gov](mailto:ahrqpubs@ahrq.hhs.gov).

## **Healthcare 411 – <<http://healthcare411.ahrq.gov>>**

Healthcare 411 is a news series produced by the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (AHRQ), part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. AHRQ's mission is to improve the quality, safety, efficiency, and effectiveness of health care for all Americans. AHRQ is the lead Federal agency in the effort to improve patient safety and reduce medical errors. Using the latest podcasting technology, weekly audio and video programs feature news and information on current health care topics with synopses of AHRQ's latest research findings. This innovative tool provides consumers with information they can use to improve the quality of their health care. In addition, the series gives AHRQ researchers and grantees an opportunity to share their findings and to be heard beyond the research community. Download the programs to your mobile media player or computer by subscribing on the site. The AHRQ subscription is free. Healthcare 411 features and programs range from 2 to 10 minutes in length. All new and archived items remain available on the Healthcare 411 site.

## **CURRENT AWARENESS AND OTHER RESOURCES**

### **House Committee on Veterans Affairs Activities – <<http://veterans.house.gov>>**

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is dedicated to improving health care and benefits for veterans. This website is designed to allow the user to interact with the committee as it continues this work. Information on membership, history, upcoming and past hearings, legislation and other important news concerning committee action is also available.

### **Veterans History Project – <<http://www.loc.gov/vets>>**

The United States Congress created the Veterans History Project in 2000. The authorizing legislation (Public Law 106-380), sponsored by Representatives Ron Kind, Amo Houghton, and Steny Hoyer in the U.S. House of Representatives and Senators Max Cleland and Chuck Hagel in the U.S. Senate, received unanimous support and was signed into law by President Clinton on October 27, 2000. A project of the Library of Congress, it relies on volunteers to collect and preserve stories of wartime service. The primary focus is on first-hand accounts of World War I, II, Korean War, Vietnam War, Persian Gulf War, and the Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts. In addition, U.S. citizen civilians who were actively involved in supporting war efforts (such as war industry workers, USO workers, flight instructors, medical volunteers, etc.) are also invited to share their valuable stories.

### **Institute of Medicine: Health of Veterans and Deployed Forces – <<http://veterans.iom.edu>>**

For many years, the Institute of Medicine, as part of the National Academies, has produced reports on the health and protection of deployed military forces and veterans. These reports build on the Academy's long history of addressing scientific and medical issues related to past and current military conflicts. This site provides information about the Institute of Medicine's work in this area, including summaries and recommendations from past reports, as well as

explanations of chemical and biological agents, and links to ongoing projects. Projects described on this website examine and assess scientific evidence. They do not discuss compensation for health outcomes, which is solely the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

**Blogs** – Otherwise known as weblogs, blogs can be utilized to assist in keeping up with veterans and military health issues. Instruction on using RSS feeds can be found for two of the most popular feed readers: <<http://www.bloglines.com>> or <<http://www.google.com/reader>>

**To locate milblogs (military blogs) and see a blog ranking:**

<[http://www.milblogging.com/topmilblogs\\_byBranch.php?br=VS5TLiBNaWxpdGFyeSAoVmV0ZXJhbik](http://www.milblogging.com/topmilblogs_byBranch.php?br=VS5TLiBNaWxpdGFyeSAoVmV0ZXJhbik)>